



## **PLANNING AHEAD 2010 HURRICANE SEASON GUIDELINES**

### **AFTER A STORM: IF YOU RETURN AFTER A MANDATORY EVACUATION**

#### **What to Do After Wind Damage and Flooding Caused by Storm Surge and/or Rainfall**

These tips were adapted from the FEMA Disaster Information website:  
[www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/fl\\_after.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/fl_after.shtm).

If you left the Key prior to the event or were part of a mandatory evacuation and want to return after the storm:

- Return to the Key only when authorities indicate it is safe. Monitor radio or other reports to learn when the Rickenbacker Causeway will be open. Village officials will have completed an initial sweep of the island and cleared roadways before this occurs. Be prepared to show proof of residency or property ownership in the Village. If you are on a reconnaissance visit, leave pets and small children with family or friends, if possible.
- Keep a battery-powered radio with you so you can listen for emergency updates, disaster relief instructions and news reports.
- Use caution while driving or walking on the Key. Avoid flooded areas. Water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. Water also may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Coastal soils may erode beneath pavement or bridge supports and collapse under the weight of a car.
- Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters.
- Use extreme caution when entering buildings; there may be hidden damage, particularly in foundations.
  - Walk carefully around the outside of your home and check for loose power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage.
  - Use a battery-powered flashlight to inspect a damaged home. Turn on the flashlight outside before entering - the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.
  - If you have any doubts about safety, do not enter. Have your residence inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer.

## AFTER A STORM, VKB 2010 Hurricane Season Guidelines, pg. 2

- Stay off the streets. Roads should be left clear for emergency vehicles and debris removal equipment. Debris-filled streets are dangerous.
- If you must go out on the streets, be on the look out for fallen objects.
  - Avoid flooded areas. Water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. Water may also be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
  - If you notice a downed power line, stay away it and report it to FPL.
- Watch out for frightened or dangerous domestic animals and wildlife on your property or in common areas. Use a stick to poke debris to flush out reptiles.
- If your home is still on a septic tank and it may be damaged, service the tank as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are serious health hazards.
- If you left the island during the storm and need to re-enter your flooded home after the event, check the home for damage. Take photographs of your home and possessions. Be careful as floors may be slippery and floorboards may have popped up.
  - **Electrical systems:** Turn off the electricity at the main breaker or fuse box, even if the power is off in your community, unless you are wet, standing in water, or unsure of your safety. That way, you can decide when your home is dry enough to turn it back on.

If the situation is unsafe (you notice sparks, for example), leave the building and call for help. Do not turn on the lights until you are sure they are safe to use. If you have any doubts about the integrity of your electrical system, have it checked by an electrician before turning on the power.
  - **Propane gas:** If you smell gas or hear a hissing or blowing sound, open a window and leave immediately. Turn off the main gas valve from the outside, if you can. Call the gas company from a neighbor's residence. If you shut off the gas supply at the main valve, you will need a professional to turn it back on. Do not smoke or use oil, gas lanterns, candles, or torches for lighting inside a damaged home until you are sure there is no leaking gas or other flammable materials present.
  - **Roof, foundation, and chimney cracks:** If it looks like the building may have structural damage or may collapse, leave immediately.

### **AFTER A STORM, VKB 2010 Hurricane Season Guidelines, pg. 3**

- **Water and sewage systems:** Check with local authorities before using any water; the water could be contaminated. Do not flush toilets until you know that sewage lines are intact.
  - **Appliances and Electronics:** If appliances are wet and the power is still on, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. Then, unplug appliances and let them dry out. Have them checked by a professional before using them again. If the power is out, turn off the electricity to appliances and unplug electronics so that they are not damaged by possible power surges once electricity is restored.
  - **Food and other supplies:** Throw out all food and other supplies that you suspect may have become contaminated or come in to contact with floodwater.
  - **Open cabinets:** Be alert for objects that may fall. Remove contents and check for moisture damage.
  - **Clean up household items:** Disinfect items that may have been contaminated by raw sewage, bacteria, or chemicals. Clean and disinfect everything salvageable that got wet in the floodwater.
- Use care handling power tools, gas lanterns, generators, candles and matches.
  - Call your insurance agent. File a claim if your home is damaged, ask for an adjuster to be sent to your property, and request financial help. Keep good records of repair and cleaning costs, and include before and after photos of your home and possessions.
  - Listen to your emergency radio for information on assistance that may be provided by the Village, state or federal government, or other organizations.
  - Be aware that unlicensed, unqualified or unscrupulous workers often arrive in disaster areas to assist in clean up or repair work. Be sure anyone you hire is qualified to do the job. Check references.